



**AMENDED DECISION NOTICE
for the Blanchard Lake Fishing Access Site Improvements**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 1, Kalispell, MT
February 2014**

Background

In January 2014, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) completed an environmental assessment (EA) to improve the facilities at Blanchard Lake Fishing Access Site (FAS) west of Whitefish, Montana. The improvements originally considered included the development of an upper parking area along Blanchard Lake Drive and trail between the upper parking area and the existing lower parking area, installation of additional signs and automatic entrance gate to the lower parking area, and improving the drainage of the access road and boat ramp.

MFWP received seventeen comments during the public comment period, with ten in favor of the proposal and four against the proposal. Three comments were neutral and provided specific comments to individual components of the proposed action. Concerns that were raised were regarding after-hours use at the FAS, use of the lake by larger watercraft that could increase shoreline erosion and noise levels, increase in visitor use of the FAS that may negatively impact local residents and wildlife, and the potential for the lake to be affected by aquatic invasive species.

Based on the analysis completed in the EA and the public comments, MFWP decided to proceed with all the proposed improvements as present in the EA. The original decision notice can be viewed at http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/decisionNotices/pn_0676.html .

Proposed Amended Decision

MFWP would not proceed with the installation of an automatic entrance gate to the lower parking area at the FAS.

Need for an Amended Decision

Since the publication of the original EA decision notice for the FAS improvements, MFWP has determined that installation of an automated entrance gate would not meet the intended objectives of the improvement, which was to deter after-hours use of the site. The upper parking area would remain outside of the gate and people could still park there and walk into the site

after hours. In addition, the costs associated with the automatic gate, its installation and maintenance, would exceed current budget allowances.

MFWP acknowledges that after-hours use of the site may occur and could be disruptive to neighboring residences. To deter after-hours usage, efforts would be made to increase MFWP's enforcement patrols at the site to deter unauthorized use. These patrols would supplement routine patrols by local law enforcement. If a significant increase in after-hours activity is observed as a result of the improvements, MFWP will also consider alternative solutions including manually closing the existing gate.

Decision

No changes are required to the original Blanchard Lake Fishing Access Site EA if the automatic gate is not installed. All other proposed improvements will be initiated as described.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "James R. Satterfield, Jr." in a cursive script.

James R. Satterfield Jr., Ph.D.
Region 1 Supervisor

Date: February 26, 2014